

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- [0023] ~~Fig. 3 is~~ Figs. 3(a)-3(c) are a flow chart of the method of the present invention. --

Please replace paragraph [0026] with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- [0026] With reference to ~~Fig. 3~~ Figs. 3(a)-3(c), the method begins at step 20 where various registers of storage 6 are initialized. These registers include, without limitation, registers for storing data related to a current allocation and a best allocation. Next, program flow advances to step 22 where a plurality of bids is received in storage 6. Each bid includes one or more items and an associated value for the one or more items. Program flow then advances to step 24 where a random, initial allocation of a subset of the bids is selected from the plurality of bids received in step 22. If this random initial allocation includes two or more bids, each bid of the random initial allocation has no bids with overlapping items. Stated differently, each bid of the random initial allocation has no item in common with another bid of the random initial allocation. --

Please replace paragraph [0038] with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- [0038] When either step 32, 38 or 40 are complete, program flow advances to step 42. ~~Where~~ where a comparison is made between the value of the current allocation and the value of the best allocation. More specifically, the sum of the values of bids of the current allocation is compared with the sum of the values of the bids of the best allocation. If the sum of the values of the bids of the current allocation is not greater than the sum of the values of the bids of the best allocation, program flow advances to step 44. However, if the sum of the values of the bids of the current allocation is greater than the sum of the values of the bids of the best allocation, program flow advances to step 46 where the best allocation, stored in the register of storage 6 reserved for the best allocation, is replaced with the current allocation. Thereafter, program flow advances to step 48 where the best allocation is displayed on display 16. --

Please replace paragraph [0039] with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- [0039] When either step 42 or step 48 ~~are~~ is complete, program flow advances to step 44. Step 44 determines if program flow has cycled through at least one of step 28 or 30 M times or if there has been no improvement in step 42 some portion of M times. If program flow has cycled through steps 28 or 30 M times or if there has been some improvement in step 42 some portion of M times, program flow advances from step 44 to step 28. Otherwise, program flow advances from step 44 to step 50. --